You'll Float Too (The Burgess Losers Club)

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Summary:

Jamie's sister, Sophie, disappears, along with the other children of their hometown, Burgess. He and his friends investigate the disappearance of children in Burgess. Along with a newcomer, they vow to defeat the terror that plagues their town: a killer clown called Pennywise. This story is mostly about the Burgess Neighborhood Kids. IT (2017) and Rise of the Guardians crossover

You'll Float Too (The Burgess Losers Club)

It all happened on a rainy spring day in Burgess, Pennsylvania. Jamie Bennett was sick in bed with the flu. His little sister, Sophie, came skipping up the steps, bored and lonely, longing to play with her big brother. Jamie was 11 and Sophie was 6. Her messy blonde hair was impossible to keep out of her eyes. She had recently lost a tooth, getting a shiny coin from the Tooth Fairy.

"Jamie!" said Sophie. "Will you play with me outside? I'm bored."

Coughing and sniffling, Jamie, her older brother with messy brown hair and brown eyes, sat up. He grabbed a tissue and blew his nose, which was running with snot from the flu.

"I can't, silly," he said. "I'm sick."

Sophie pouted. "You stink!" she said.

"Hey, not my fault there's a cold going on at school," Jamie argued.

Seeing how disappointed his sister was, Jamie decided that even though he couldn't play outside, he'd cheer her up. He always liked playing with her. Being the oldest and since his parents divorced, he took the role of the man of the house. His mother explained that their father wanted nothing to do with them.

"How 'bout I make you a boat, Sophie?" asked Jamie, coughing slightly.

Sophie brightened up. "Really?!" she said joyfully. "Can you make it with fairies and unicorns?"

"Sure, Soph. Get some of your glittery markers and crayons and you can draw on it."

The younger Bennett skipped down the hallway to get her stuff. Her heart was beating so fast with excitement to get a nice gift from her older brother. She and Jamie sat on the bed, decorating the little boat on a pink piece of paper. She decorated it with glittery flowers, fairies, unicorns and every girly thing she could imagine. Jamie

reluctantly helped out with making the boat look just as she would've liked it. Sophie watched as her older brother folded the paper expertly, creating it.

"Go get some sealing wax," he said. "It's in the basement."

Sophie looked a bit nervous. She never liked the basement. She looked scared.

"Well? Go get it!" said Jamie. "If you want the boat to not get wet, we need the wax."

"O-OK, Jamie," she said.

As she went towards the basement, she reached for the light switch, gazing down at the darkness. Her mother was sitting at the desk, buried in her bills and paperwork. She gulped, looking down at the dark; the light flicked on with her tiny fingers; the steps were unfinished and the smell of dampness filled her nose. She tentatively went down the steps, listening to the silence and the creaks and moans of the pipes. They always scared her. She hated it. She looked on the shelf of the tools to find the turtle wax for her brother. Soon as she got it, she bolted upstairs, shutting the light off and slamming the door shut.

"Don't slam the door, Sophie!" said her mother scolding.

"Sorry."

She went up the stairs and gave her brother the sealing wax to coat the paper boat so it wouldn't sink. Before doing so, he printed the name S.S. Sophie on the side with a sparkly bubblegum pink crayon. Sophie smiled wide, pleased with her big brother's boat. She watched as Jamie painted the wax on the boat. Once it was complete, she smiled.

"I'm gonna go sail it," she said.

She went to grab her yellow raincoat, decorated with red ladybugs and her pink rain boots.

"Just be careful," said Jamie. "Come back safely. Don't talk to

strangers."

"I won't," Sophie promised.

"And don't lose the boat," he warned. "I won't make another one."

"I won't. Thanks, big brother!"

Once outside, Sophie placed her little pink boat in the flooded street, watching it sail swiftly down with the current. She giggled, chasing after it. The rain was pouring down on the fine spring day. The boat took a turn down the next street. The sparkles of the S.S. Sophie glittered and continued continued to float. She dodged street signs, splashed in puddles, getting her jeans wet. She wished Jamie was here to see it all. It was glorious!

It was then her paper boat began to head straight for a storm drain.

"NO!" she shrieked upset as she watched the paper boat fall in the darkness of the storm drain.

She knelt down and gazed in the blackness of the drain, searching for the boat. She sulked.

Jamie's going to kill me! She thought bitterly. *I promised him I wouldn't lose it!*

Sighing, she had to think up a lie to tell her brother about how she lost the boat. He wasn't going to like it that she lost it. Well, surely, Jamie would understand if it went down a storm drain. It wasn't her fault. She was just about to get up and head back home, imagining the anger and disappointment Jamie would've been when she told him she lost the boat-but surely he'd understand, until she heard something stirring. Probably a cat. She peered in, leaning closer. It was then a pair of yellow eyes glowed in the dark. This made her jump back. A cat? Was it a cat? They looked quite big to be cat's eyes.

"Hiya, Sophie!" said a voice in the dark.

Sophie frowned, narrowing her eyes to see who said that, moving a strand of hair out of her face; she saw the face of a clown grinning at

her. She didn't respond since she was very wary of strangers. He had a mass of wild orange hair. His face was painted white with a large red grin; his teeth reminded her of a rabbit's but were oddly scary. He had a red painted nose. His eyes were a blue. Yet Sophie could've sworn she saw they were yellow earlier. The attire was an odd one: it was white with orange fluffy buttons. A dirty ruff around his neck. He wore white gloves.

"What a nice boat," the clown said, holding up the paper boat. "Do you want it back?

Sophie couldn't help but feel relieved that her boat hadn't been lost after all. She did want it back so she didn't have to lie to Jamie about losing the boat.

"Um...yes, please," she said nervously. "My brother made it."

"I see. Where is he?"

"He's sick in bed."

"Oh," the clown said, pouting sadly. "That's a shame." After a beat, he spoke again. "Would you like a balloon?"

"I'm not supposed to take things from strangers," Sophie said. "My Mommy and Daddy said so."

"Very wise of your Mommy and Daddy. Let me introduce myself...I'm Pennywise the Dancing Clown. Sophie, meet Pennywise. Pennywise, meet Sophie. Now we're not strangers anymore."

Sophie smiled, showing a missing tooth. "I guess so," she said.

"Do you want a balloon?"

"Do they float?" she asked.

"Oh yes...they float..."

"What are you doing down there?" she asked.

"The storm blew me down here along with the whole circus. Do you

like the circus? There's peanuts, popcorn, hotdogs and..."

Sophie could smell something distinctive coming from the storm drain, aside from the wet leaves and mud, there was a smell that reminded her of the time she went to the county fair with Jamie. There was the smell of animal manure and the sickly smells of sweets and salty foods.

"How about candy apples?" she asked.

"You like those, Sophie?" Pennywise said delighted. "They're my favorite too. They're sticky and red."

Sophie nodded, growing more excited. Eventually she felt uneasy by the clown's presence, glancing slightly nervous to see if anyone was looking for her, if her mother was calling her. Anything. She promised she'd be back. She didn't want her mother or brother to worry.

"I gotta go," she said uneasy.

"Don't forget your boat," Pennywise said, holding the boat in his gloved hand. "Here...take it."

Sophie started to reach for it tentively, feeling nervous. The clown sort of pulled it back teasingly. The girl frowned slightly and reached further in to grab her brother's boat. It was then the clown grabbed Sophie's arm and with a frightening roar, it flashed sharp rows of fangs, biting the girl's arm clean off. She let out a horrifying shriek of pain and terror. Her arm bled red in the street, leaving a trail of red like the rivers of Egypt. She crawled away, sobbing...

It was then she felt something grab her pink rainboot and dragged her down into the sewers, disappearing forever...

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JAMIE!

Jamie gasped as he awoke from a nightmare, drenched in sweat. He had the strangest dream. He was so sure he heard Sophie scream his name. He dreamt she was falling. She was in trouble. She was

hanging off of a precipice and he ran as fast as he could to get to her; his legs felt like they were stuck in molasses. He was running in slow motion, Sophie was screaming for him, calling for help.

"I'm slipping, Jamie!" she screamed. "Help me, Jamie!"

By the time he got to her, she was already being dragged into the dark, screaming his name. He was too late. Shivering, he huddled under the blankets. Was it the fever or the fear he felt when he awoke from the nightmare. Sighing, he tried to relax. Sophie was fine. She'd come home. She promised she would be back. She wasn't far from any of his friends who lived on the streets. They'd help her find her way back home if she got lost. She knew where they lived.

It was only after an hour or so, his mother came up the stairs.

"Jamie, where's your sister?" she asked.

"She went outside to play," he said.

"When did she go out?"

Jamie looked at the clock next to his bed. She had been gone for quite a while.

"I...I don't know," he said nervously. "It was a while ago."

Jamie's mother went downstairs, looking for Sophie. She wasn't outside in the yard. She looked up and down the street. Sophie wasn't there either. Fear rose up in Mrs. Bennett's body. No. She had to stay calm. Maybe she was at her friend's house. She called some of Sophie's friends who lived nearby along with Jamie's. None of them had seen her. It was then panic began to arise inside. Where was her daughter? Why did she go out by herself?

By that nightfall, everyone in town was searching for Sophie. The police had been summoned. Jamie's friends, Monty, a bespeckled asthmatic, Caleb and Claudius, twin black boys with loud mouths and full of pranks, Pippa, the redhead, and Cupcake, the heavyset tomboy who liked tutus all came over to the Bennetts', comforting Jamie. They were just as worried.

"We'll find her," Pippa assured.

Jamie felt tears pricking his eyes. It was all his fault. He let her go out in the rain. He should've just got out of bed and went with her. He was the oldest. Sophie was his responsiblity.

"It's my fault," he said, his voice breaking.

"How could it be your fault?" Claude asked. "She went outside by herself."

"I should've stopped her. I should've gone with her," Jamie said, tears streaming down his freckled cheeks. "It's my fault."

"We'll find her," Cupcake said. "She can't have gone too far."

Jamie wanted to believe that his sister would be found but in his heart, he knew that wasn't true. He should've said 'no. we'll go out tomorrow' or some other day. Sophie could be pretty determined. Given that Burgess was a safe neighborhood, not a lot of bad stuff happened. He was certain something bad had happened to her. The Nightmare had bothered him. Something about the way she screamed as she fell into black, disappearing. How slow he ran to her in the dream.

It's your fault, Jamie! It's YOUR fault!

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The months went by. Sophie was still reported missing. Her missing poster remained hanging on the telephone poles, bulletin board at the library or community center. But she wasn't found. Nobody ever found her. She was just another missing child like every other one that went missing in Burgess.

Jamie's mom grew mournful. There were days she hardly slept. She would sleep on the couch all day long, hoping Sophie would walk in the door. Her hair was matted. Her eyes became sunken.

Jamie felt guilty. There were nights he couldn't sleep either. He kept hearing Sophie's screams in the dark, calling his name for him to save her. He failed to every time. He wished he never let her go outside by

herself. He wished he could've just gotten out of bed and went with her. He was so stupid.

One night, Jamie got up to get a drink of water after another disturbing nightmare about his little sister. He heard what sounded like wet footsteps, creeping down the hall. He frowned, listening. They were gone. Shaking his head, he started to drink his water. That's when he heard the giggling. Sophie's laugh. He knew it.

"S-Sophie?" he called.

It was dead silent. He heard the footsteps again and a flash of yellow. He just caught it in his peripheral vision. He followed the sounds towards the basement door, which was strangely open. He didn't remember it being open the last time. Frowning, he reached for the light switch, only to hear silent clicks. Sophie's laugh emerged from the basement.

He grabbed a flashlight from the utility drawer in the kitchen and went down in the basement. The steps creaked under his bare feet. He swallowed, hearing his heart in his ears. The sounds of water and dripping came from the basement. Mom did tell him to stay out of the basement for now since it was flooded and needed to be pumped by the repairman this week.

"Sophie?" he called in a high voice. "Sophie, are you down here?"

The sloshing of water came from somewhere in the basement. Jamie shined his flashlight in the direction of the sound, seeing nothing but water. The hairs on his neck stood up. His heart pounded faster.

Another giggle. He shined his light towards it and saw...

"Sophie?" he said.

There was his little sister, dressed in her yellow raincoat and pink rubber rain boots. She looked quite happy, her green eyes shining.

"Jamie, if you come with me, you'll float too," she said.

"Wh-what are you talking about?" Jamie asked uncomfortable.

"You'll float too, you'll float too..." she said in a giggly voice.

She repeated this line until it became angry.

"YOU'LL FLOAT TOO! YOU'LL FLOAT TOO!"

Jamie watched in horror as he watched his sister's face began to decompose, her voice becoming distorted as if it were a waterlogged demon from some other world. He saw something behind Sophie and saw a white face; a clown: with orange eyes, its red painted mouth was moving silently, speaking the same words as Sophie. He watched in horror as he realized that it was the clown doing this! He was using his sister like a ventriloquist's dummy...her eyes became white, corneas were glazed over with a deathly gaze, her skin grey and decomposed, her mouth distorted in a horrifying scream. Then, the clown dropped Sophie into the water and that's when he realized the water was red like the Biblical story when Moses turned the Nile River into blood, plaguing Egypt. It even stank like blood: the heavy coppery stench tickled his nostrils, making him feel sick.

Jamie stared frozen and horrified as he saw the desecration of what was done to his sister. He stared silently at the clown that had done this.

"What did you do to her?!" he yelled angrily.

The clown didn't answer. It charged angrily towards Jamie, roaring and shrieking in an unnatural way. Jamie shrieked and ran up the stairs, dropping the flashlight and slamming the door shut.

"JAMIE BENNETT!" said the voice of his angry, yet scared mother. "What are you doing out of bed?"

"I...I just..." he stammered, his heart still hammering in his chest. "I was thirsty and I thought I heard a noise in the basement..."

"OK," said Mrs. Bennett. "You scared me there. Why'd you slam the door?"

"There was something in the basement...a clown..."

Mrs. Bennett frowned. "Aren't you a little old to be believing in the

Boogeyman, Jamie?" she said.

"I'm serious. It...It had orange hair..." he continued, describing it in a breathless tone.

"It was just a bad dream, Jamie. Go back to bed." Mrs. Bennett said, exhausted from her sleepless night. She wasn't in the mood to hear anything. All she wanted was for Sophie to come home.

Jamie sighed, defeated. There was no way his mom would believe what he saw down there.